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Helena Citizen Conservation Board
316 N. Park Avenue
Helena, MT 59623

October __, 2019

Mayor Collins and City Commissioners
City County Building
316 N. Park Avenue
Helena, MT 59623

Dear Mayor Collins and Commissioners:

The Helena Citizens Conservation Board would like to state our support for the City of Helena setting the goal of achieving 100 percent clean electricity, community-wide, by 2030.

As stated in City Resolution 20375, the City of Helena has recognized global climate change is occurring, humans are contributing to it, and reductions in greenhouse gasses are necessary to avert the negative consequences of a changing climate. The resolution also noted that Helena is already being negatively impacted by warmer weather from climate change, including increased risk of catastrophic wildfires and threats to our outdoor tourism industry.

This past summer the Helena community unfortunately saw a vivid example of these threats. While human caused, the North Hills Fire burned more than 5,000 acres right in Helena's backyard, costing an estimated \$7.2 million in fire suppression and leaving a charred section of forest behind.¹ According to the 2017 Montana Climate Assessment, climate change is projected to cause conditions that will make incidents like the North Hills Fire more frequent and/or severe, including increased annual temperatures, hotter summers, reduced low-elevation snowpack, earlier spring snowmelt, and more frequent and intense droughts.²

Helena can and should do our part to mitigate the impacts of climate change, in particular by reducing our reliance on fossil fuels for our energy supply. Achieving 100 percent clean electricity for our community would reduce the production of greenhouse gas emissions that currently result from activity within the city.

There are a number of near and long-term steps the city could undertake to achieve this goal, including:

- Expanding the city's revolving loan program for rooftop solar;

¹ See Helena Independent Record, 9/19/19, https://helenair.com/news/local/suspect-cited-in-north-hills-fire-near-helena/article_0482b313-41a7-5dae-a1e9-2c72a69a72ee.html

² See 2017 Montana Climate Assessment, www.montanaclimate.org

- Adopting more energy efficient building codes;
- Adopting “solar ready” building codes;
- Completing the conversion to LED street lights within the city;
- Improving energy efficiency in city buildings and operations;
- Working with the local private utility to achieve this goal.

Helena would not be the first city to set this kind of goal. In fact, more than 135 cities large and small around the country have set goals of reaching 100 percent clean energy. In our region this includes the City and County of Missoula, City of Spokane, City of Boise, and Salt Lake City.

To help protect Helena’s economy, community, and way of life for both current citizens and future generations, we urge you to adopt the goal of achieving 100 percent clean electricity, community-wide, by 2030.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please let us know if you have any questions or would like to discuss this with the Citizen Conservation Board further.

Sincerely,
